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1.

A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

(b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

(c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;

(d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of generally increasing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a general increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a generally decreasing discount in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments;

(e) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and

(f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers

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2. A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

3. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 2, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

4. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 2, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

5. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1, wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

6. A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 1 wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

7. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

8. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

9. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a delivery date.

10. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
- (7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
- (8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

11. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- (4) a processed commodity.

12. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

13. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

(d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a general increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally decreasing discount in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

14. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

15. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 14, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

16. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 14, wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

17. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 16, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

18. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 16, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

19. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 16, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

20. A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

(b) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

(c) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

(d) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

(e) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;

(f) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of generally increasing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a general increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a generally decreasing discount in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments;

(g) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and

(h) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

21. A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

22. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

23. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

24. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that are pre-qualified by said trusted intermediary entity as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

25. A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 20 wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

26. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

27. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

28. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized by said trusted intermediary entity to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a projected delivery date.

29. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
- (7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
- (8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

30. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- (4) a processed commodity.

31. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

32. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

(f) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a general increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally decreasing discount in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

33. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

34. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 33, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

35. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 33, wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture

Fig 1

39. A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

(b) providing a virtual exchange which allows for a relatively direct, aggregated, and moderated series of commercial interactions between a plurality of manufacturers of articles of manufacture and a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture, which is under control of said trusted intermediary entity, but which is otherwise a relatively disintermediated commercial interaction;

(c) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is utilized to enable said virtual exchange and which is available to said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture for offering for sale through said virtual exchange said plurality of articles of manufacture and to a plurality of potential purchasers of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

(d) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

(e) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to obtain production guarantees from said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

(f) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers through

said virtual exchange;

(g) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;

(h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of generally increasing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a general increase in said commercial risk experienced by said plurality of manufacturers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a generally decreasing discount in price to said plurality of potential purchasers to encourage and reward early commercial commitments;

(i) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and

(j) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

48. A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
- (7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
- (8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

49. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- (4) a processed commodity.

50. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

51. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

(h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a general increase in said commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally decreasing discount in price to said plurality of potential purchasers to encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

52. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

53. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 52, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

54. A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 52, wherein said marketing interface of said virtual exchange includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

